

Experimental Aircraft Assoc.

Chapter 302 ~ Conroe, TX



EAA 302 visits AirVenture

Most of the 302 members that came to Oshkosh gathered for the annual AirVenture photo and a chapter dinner Wednesday. The weather was great this year. Depending on the bus transportation was the only concern, but that worked okay too (just slow).



Young Eagles ~ Share The Dream



**August 14th
Meeting:**

Program:

***Ivan Wimp
is scheduled
to speak to us.***

**Lunch: Fajita
fly-out to Lufkin?**

Why I'm Leaving EAA *by Perry McConnell*

I have long debated myself over whether to tell you this. Or at least whether to tell you this in this way. EAA 302 is your organization. I'm a relative newcomer. I'd be well beyond my right to expect anyone, much less those of you who built this organization, to follow my lead on this issue, and I do not. Yet I must leave, and I would tell you why so that you can determine for yourselves whether I have the right of it. And so that you would know that my decision has nothing to do with any of you, who I consider my friends. And so judge accordingly.

Quite simply, I've lost the faith.

Dick Kardell said it, more eloquently than could I, one day last year when about fifteen people were working on 810BC. I paraphrase here, because my memory is imperfect, but his words were, more or less, "This is supposed to be what it is about. It's supposed to be about building airplanes."

I remember more than a twinge of guilt at those words, because I'd been burning an inordinate amount of our meeting times focusing on mundanities such as compliance with Texas non-profit corporation law, and related issues that bored me, even when I had the stimulus of having to conduct the meetings. I cannot imagine the depth of boredom these discussions incited in those of you who have not had to endure the three years of Advanced Boredom called law school. However necessary compliance with Texas law is, I'd rather be learning something about my airplane that I didn't know before. Or learning about someone else's airplane. Or building an

airplane. Or just flying.

In my judgment, EAA doesn't do that, anymore.

Consider the photos at, for example: <http://www.airventure.org/2004/gallery/july30.html>, and consider how many of them have any relationship to experimental aviation and how many of them are publicity photos for corporate sponsors, or concern only or primarily certificated aircraft. Even this year's "sweepstakes" airplane is (you guessed it) a Piper. It's thus easy to draw the conclusion that most of EAA, and especially "AirVenture" is about money, but not money that goes to charitable or educational purposes. At <http://www.airventure.org/2004/thurjuly2-9/gathering.html>, I found the following: "When the gavel came down, EAA President Tom Poberezny, ... announced that more than \$300,000 had been raised for Young Eagles and other EAA programs." At first glance, it sounds like the EAA raised \$300K to support Young Eagles. But there's the "and other" part, and those of you who think about it will realize how little Young Eagles must cost EAA, with us supplying volunteer airplanes, fuel, and primary insurance, and EAA supplying only paper certificates and an umbrella insurance policy.

There are further factors, some personal, which are too numerous to list here. These include extremely condescending e-mails from EAA (paraphrased): "Thank you for expressing your opinion. We're glad you had the opportunity to do so. However, we here at EAA have to consider a great range of issues, and your disagreement with our policies is ridiculous, because we know

what's best."

Yet these people think I'm going to send them \$40 a year, just to be a member of my local chapter. They really do. Multiply that number by the EAA membership. I guess they can afford to be condescending.

More than one of you has heard me refer to the (national organization) EAA as the "Tom Poberezny lifetime employment fund." This is how I have come to understand the national organization. Unfortunately, I cannot remain a member of EAA302 without contributing \$40 a year to EAA. I can, in good conscience, no longer do so. I have renewed my (national) membership as long as I have because I agreed to do this job, and I will not walk away from my commitments. However, on January 1, 2005, my membership in EAA (national) is resigned. Although I dislike the circumstance, I respect the right of the national organization to set its own rules -- I cannot, accordingly, remain a member of EAA302.

My \$18 / year "dues" I will happily donate to this chapter as a gift, and I hope that I might be welcomed as a guest at meetings somewhere down the line. The \$40 / year that EAA would otherwise receive will most likely go to AOPA, which at least has the intestinal fortitude to scream (often eloquently) when GA is taking it on the chin. But I cannot, and will not, continue to give money to an organization which is unconcerned with its membership, except as convenient sources of funding. As a result, I can no longer be a member of EAA, and thus of EAA302.

My regards to all of you. Fly good.

Oshkosh highlights



At left is a "Really" Experimental Helio. The owner bills it as "A top performing SUV, Your Camping Buddy." It is turbine powered, and features a smoke system (spot that wind drift), a spray system (kills the mosquitos before you land), three air horns (clears animals from the landing area), and hydraulics (split the campfire logs with the touch of a button). T.O. is 300', Landing is 200', payload 2,000 lbs., R.O.C. is 3,000 fpm, cruise is 200 mph at 20,000'. At right, Burt Rutan and Mike Melvill were in the Theater In The Woods to share the story of their quest for space. The video of SpaceShipOne (SS1), that Mike piloted into space, was terrific! At one time in the flight, Mike's ROC was 186,000 fpm (about Mock 3). Burt wants to have a raffle for a seat on SS1 and fly at Oshkosh! Civilian space tourists get ready!